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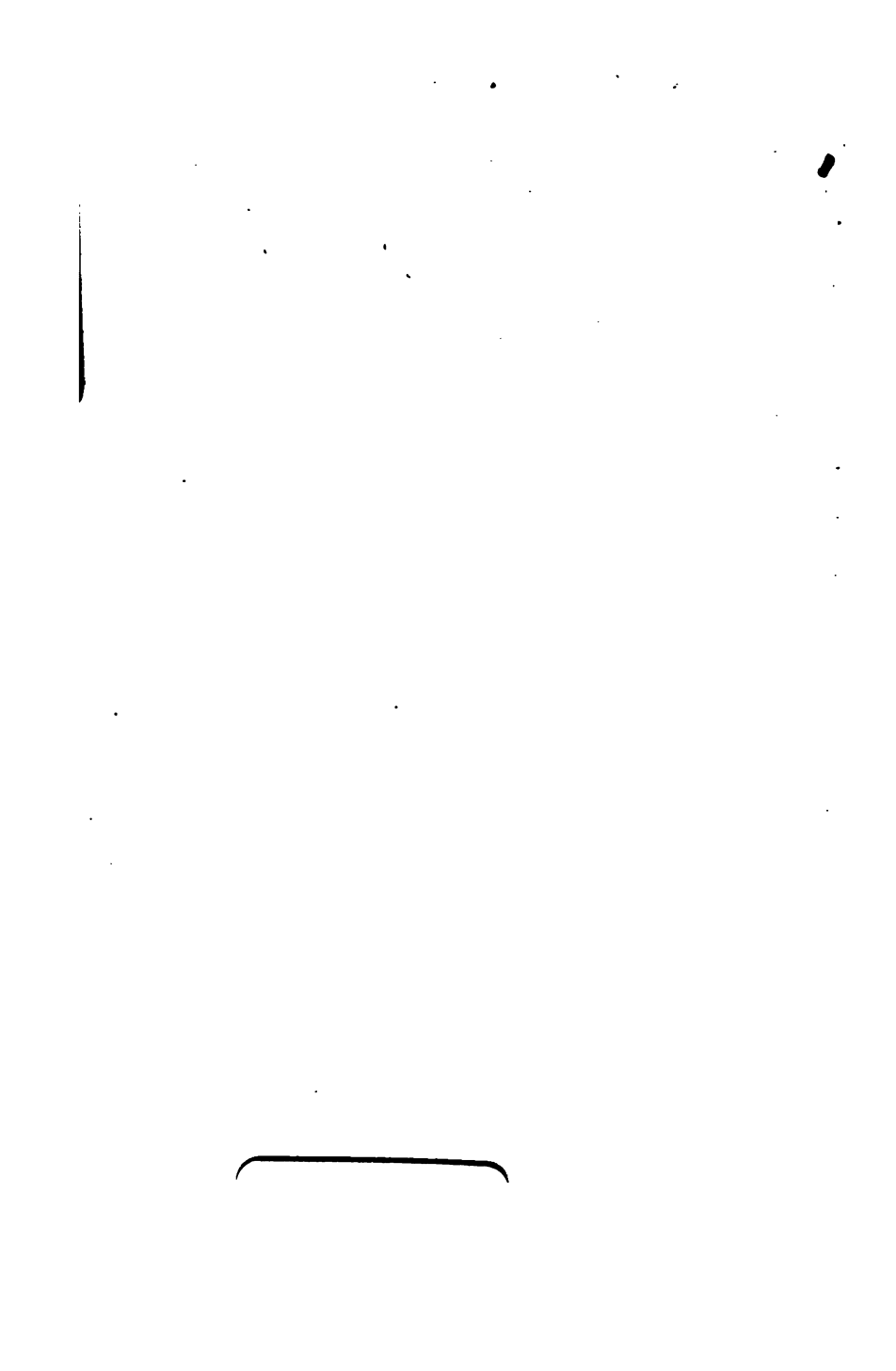
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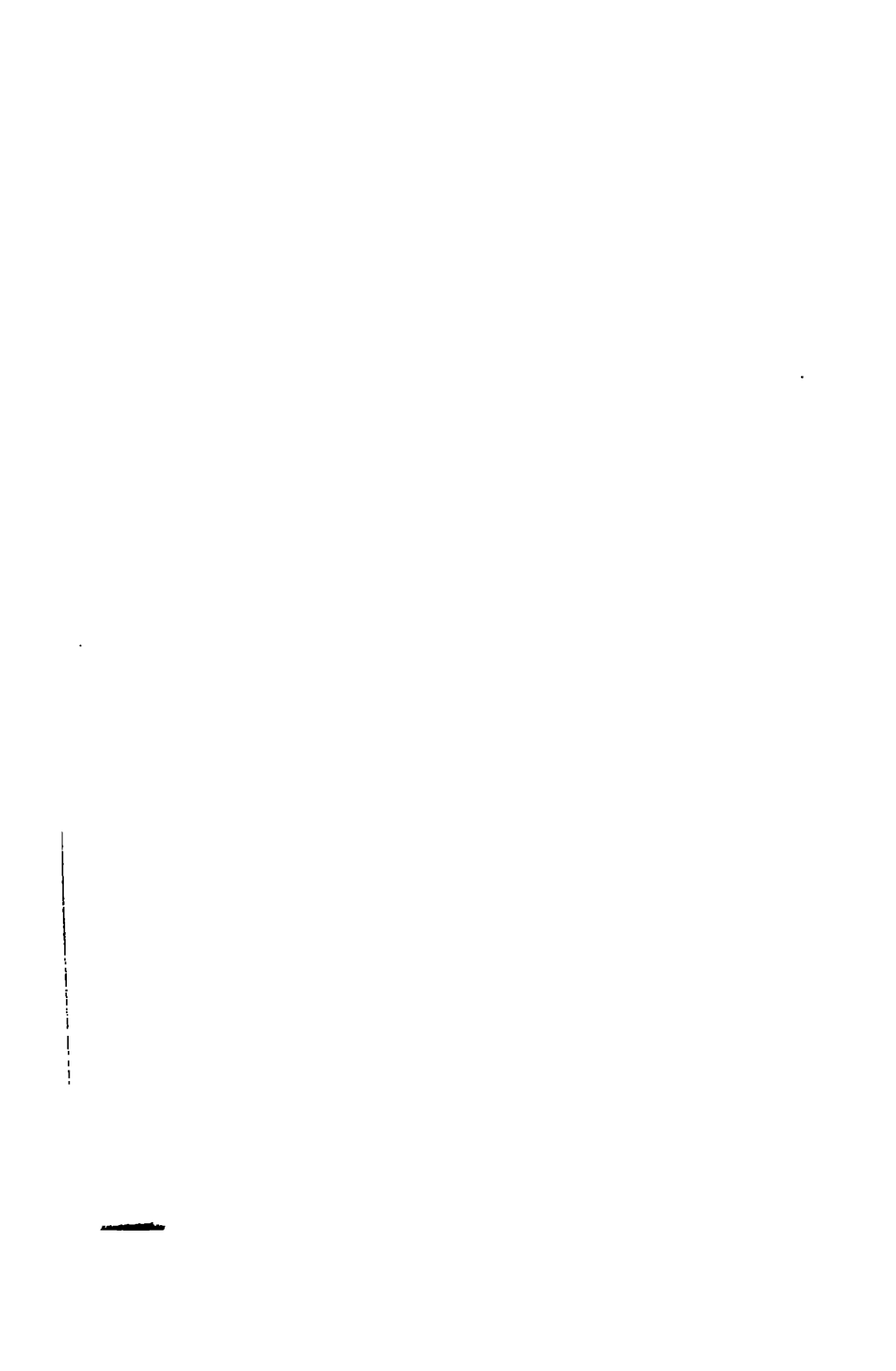


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FELINE PHILOSOPHY
BY THOMAS CAT

WALTER LEON HESS







FELINE PHILOSOPHY BY THOMAS CAT

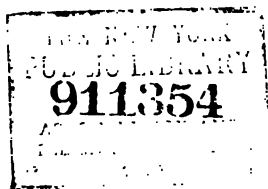
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*I have nine lives
And a number of wives—
But at last I must put a ban
On feline ways
And midnight lays
For now I live with man!*



FELINE PHILOSOPHY

BY THOMAS CAT



FELINE PHILOSOPHY

BY THOMAS CAT

FIRST CATERWAUL

THE family have gone to the country,
Horton, his wife and four children.
They took the butler and maids, the dogs,
The canaries and parrot. Shutters
They put on the house and the keys
Are turned in the locks. The silver
Was put in the vault and everything
Valuable carefully stowed. . . .

Little Jack
Looked well for me. But when he found me
Was told to put me outside; a cat has no
Place in a house that is closed for
The summer.

When they were sorely troubled
With rats and mice they coaxed me to
Come to live in the cellar. They fed
Me richly on cream and the choicest

Bits from their lavish table. They gave
Me a rug to sleep, and taught the children
To pet me. All took turns to feed me and
They saved the bones of each fish.

The

Mice and rats disappeared; the rug
Is filthy, in tatters. Old Horton curses
And kicks me and kicks me down stairs when he
Meets me; warns the baby to heed my
Claws and the older children that
Cats breed all sorts of diseases. Edith
Has young men to call and "cannot abide
The cat that is covered with ashes."
Only Jack remembers—which reminds me
How well I was treated. I was young when
They found me and now have grown wise in
Their councils.

I have no food and no
Lodging.



SECOND CATERWAUL

It's more than a week since I've eaten
And my bed is made in the gutter. Well-fed
And beggars go by and their boots are
All alike ready as soon as they spy me.
Jack Horton went by with his father and
Stooped to whisper his secret. Old Horton
Jerked his arm and urged that he'd miss
The train. So even railroad time
Seems relentless as the procession
Passes over and about me. Between buying
A new suit for his party
And his affection
Even young Jack had no choice.
Now I have to hunt
And I've eaten a sparrow for breakfast.
I ate with infinite relish
Though I never ate one before;
I was starved and the murder and crime
Were lost in my terrible necessity.
My depravity is beginning to wear. . . .
I shall wander down to the river. . . .
I have heard Jack's father say:
When a man falls so low as that
He had better drown himself than—
I've forgotten the rest; I cannot think
In my present state of mind.

THIRD CATERWAUL

ARRIVED at the wharf there was not
Another soul in sight . . . except at the very end
Where sat a most woebegone looking Tramp
Smoking what was once a cigar
Of price. Half smoked it had been thrust
In the gutter at the theater-entrance
By a careless and prosperous merchant.
The Tramp was very near to the edge looking out
Over the water as blankly as a blind man.
A man! Look at him . . . and I a mere cat!
No doubt Old Horton was right. . . . One leap
Into the darkness and all gloomy thoughts,
All trouble, like the half-finished cigar
Would give place to beautiful dreams and
Never-ending. . . . At least it cannot be much
Worse. . . . No! Far better than the foul gutter
And the murderous cravings for the unattainable.
I shall burst my bonds and jump in.



FOURTH CATERWAUL

It gave a terrible fright when I struck
The water. Even in filth and mud I found it more
Pleasure to swim than to drown. How comfortable
The gutter now seemed but my strength was
Utterly useless. . . . My thoughts had been
Less overwhelming than the murky slime that
Would kill me . . . and to sink, to be swallowed
By fishes that had been sweet food for my palate.
A boat came out of the darkness and a brown
Arm folded me up from the last gasp in the river.
It was going out to a yacht and the mate was the
Man who rescued: "What luck with our rats and
mice
To find this bedraggled feline. . . . Maggie can
give
It some milk and the Master won't curse for the
Vermin. . . ."

Perhaps I was born as an antidote!
Perhaps I have no choice what to do!
But whatever may be I shall at least do
What is expected, the best that I can—
How else can I expect anything?

FIFTH CATERWAUL

DID you ever see a palace in a desert?
Ralph Dimon was a good catch and Irene's
Father was very rich. Low necked dress,
Dress clothes, lace, jewelry, curtains of
Fine brocade, mahogany panellings and
Nickel-mountings dimmed the lights of Brough's
Yacht and were more plentiful than the drops
Of water that had nearly drowned me.
As I was lifted over the side I saw the
Two lovers lounging in the bow where there
Were no lights; while inside the electric
Lamps burned neglected. The wind blew a gale
And I shivered; but comfortable surroundings
And even diamonds would warm anybody but a
Half drowned cat. . . .

I wonder if pink ribbons
And a silver-mounted collar would have made
Me warmer or less hungry . . . and I was most
Interested because Irene's father never paid
His bills without a lawsuit. . . . Perhaps I might
With ribbon and collar have had food for the
asking.

But an honest cat must be kicked around
The kitchen by Maggie. Maggie was used to it:

"Haven't you better sense than to bring such Rubbish aboard, Jim? Old Brough will miss the Milk and there'll be the devil to pay."—And To think how I could rid this palace of vermin. . . .

But that would cost Father Brough money and It wouldn't show. . . .

Jim put me ashore . . . but I was grateful!



SIXTH CATERWAUL

WHAT a terrible contrast: from an interrupted
Yachting trip to the garbage can! The smell
Of the sea is sweeter but I wasn't dressed
For it. . . . The lure of a square meal is sweeter
Than the glitter of paste.

Think of finding a
Half beefsteak on top of the can! There was no
Gravy but it was cooked to perfection. I ate it
With relish, but should have enjoyed it better
If only some one would let me work for it—
Especially such a meal. . . . And yet they say
beggars
Cannot be choosers. . . . I found a lot more in
the can
To eat, but the steak satisfied me.
I was very tired; so I went to sleep beside the
Can. . . .

When the collector came he took counsel of
My presence and hunted through to see what he
could
Find of value. He looked up and down the street
And then slipped a half-roasted-chicken into his
Blouse; but not before casting me a look of
Triumph. . . . But I never can eat two meals at a
Sitting and chicken doesn't agree with me. Then,

Too, even honey is nourishing, but it may give
One indigestion. . . . I hope he enjoyed the chicken
As much as I did my banquet. . . .

Why, thought I, not
Offer to stay in this house where plenty runs
To overflowing. . . .

It proved to be Brough's!



SEVENTH CATERWAUL

I **PREFER** the street and the gutter
To the hospitality Brough's might have offered.
How lucky to be a cat
Free to accept or—refuse
What is offered!



EIGHTH CATERWAUL

I FOUND a door that was open.
The grass in the entry was cut close;
The hangings and drawing-room furniture
Immaculate in their smug neatness. Even the
Windows were clean and the books on the
Shelves were well dusted. I wandered into
The kitchen where oilcloth was spotless
And tidy. Even the walls were fresh-papered. . . .
No doubt to keep the kalsomine-water
From evaporating. . . .

Table-manners in such
A house, I fear, are more real than the eating.
I turned about and went out lest the hairs
In my coat might scatter.



NINTH CATERWAUL

I HAVE been housed with Jerolamon Jones
And his wife, whom they call "tame cat,"
For what seems a fairly long time. Jerry
They call him for short and short is the Bible
He reads. Lovers they are to the world and
To each other still more—for that is the
Judgment that counts . . . Jerry has nights
"At the club" and loves his dear wife's
Friends. She can always reach him by 'phone
But she wouldn't do it for worlds as she
Trusts him beyond cavil or guile. . . .
And the tame cat sits on the laps of a
Dozen or more of his friends—but only
When Jerry is home.

I followed Jerry one night
But his club was not where he went. . . .
We came home exactly at twelve—and Marion
(That was his wife) was fast asleep in the sheets.
Fulton had kissed her that night—and of course
She told Jerry next day. . . . He trusted his wife
As she him. . . .

They were playing the game
When I left—I left because only I
Knew how to end the farce!

TENTH CATERWAUL

I HAVE wandered over the city aimless and homeless,
Hungered in mind and in body.
Days are not irksome in sunshine
And rain promises more when it ceases.
But the nights are so intimate
And the rays of one's mind
Are perlucid.
Like a criminal tracing his steps
Back to the scene of iniquity,
I found myself in Horton's neighborhood. . . .
But the house was still closed for the summer.



TWELFTH CATERWAUL

I'VE been sitting in the gutter and wondering—
Strange dreams come to me in strange places—
The glare of approaching motor
Bewildered my thoughts still more.
I saw stranger things in the shadows
Than the glow of the lights revealed.
And the deepest shadows
Close behind the gleaming arcs of the motor
Showed heads that were snuggled close.
Edith Horton was one
And Brough—who is married—the other.
No matter how dark the night its shame is reful-
gent
To Heaven.
The chain of my reverie was broken
As the lash will draw blood from the purest. . . .
And yet I am only a cat that was nearly
Run over!



THIRTEENTH CATERWAUL

JACK HORTON has taken me back—
His father's boots are now mouldy.
Edith does charity work and teaches in
Sunday-school. Brough is the superintendent. . . .
The mortgage on Mallory's house
Was foreclosed on Saturday morning.
Mallory, wife and six children
Were sitting out on the street,
Their shabby trappings about them. . . .
A syndicate bought the house
From Brough—his profit was ten thousand dollars.
Brough is rolling in wealth.
But Mallory now and Brough
Will seem to me much more alike:
Neither will pay his bills.
. . . But Jack is kind to me
And Brough's not the milk
That I drink!



FOURTEENTH CATERWAUL

WHEN Mallory worked in the shops
He drank up the wages he earned.
Now that he's out of a job
He's docile and kind to his wife
And dawdles the baby all day.
Old Horton used to say that Mallory
Was a good mechanic and a bad father.
Thus do critics fall out—Now that Old Horton
Is dead
He could not reverse his opinion
Nor the marble slab on his grave.
Joe Mallory was always Jack's chum; so Jack got
after
His friends. . . . Now he's delighted and proud
For he found Mallory a job
Which Mallory thoroughly liked and took
For the price of giving up drink.



FIFTEENTH CATERWAUL

EDITH was reading the paper
Breakfasting on the couch
At the foot of which I sat.
Her face was as pale as a ghost. . . . She read
Something twice out loud:
"James Brough in the Bankruptcy Court.
Squandered his fortune on women;
Many society girls in his net."
She fainted just as her mother came in; so I
Quietly left the room. . . .
And yet there is now a law
That the lamps of motors be dimmed!



SIXTEENTH CATERWAUL

JACK and his older brother went to the wharf
As Ralph Dimon is going abroad.
He's going to stay for some time. . . .
Irene's been released
From a very long engagement.
Not only for mourning it seems
That weddings are postponed.
Irene looks dejected and weary—
She came to see Edith this morning.
The two are off for the mountains together. . . .
They say Ralph was richer than Brough.



SEVENTEENTH CATERWAUL

THEY are sending Jack to boarding-school—
He debated long should he take me?
If only I were a dog!—but grown boys
Don't make pets of cats. . . .
He doesn't know why he's going away—
But I do: Alice, the maid, is in trouble
And Mrs. Horton is shocked—and doesn't
Want Jack to know.



EIGHTEENTH CATERWAUL

EVER since Jack went away
Mrs. Horton has looked after me.
The day he left
She came to the window
And threw out Old Horton's boots.
At first I thought they were thrown
At me—but it seems that she threw them
Wide of the window!
When I voiced my surprise
She hurried to me and now
I sleep on her divan!



NINETEENTH CATERWAUL

CLARENCE HORTON, Jerolamon Jones and a few
Of the other young bloods had a party last night—
Hunt breakfast they called it, I think.
They started by talking of dogs—hounds and
Horse-flesh and mounts. I gathered that sort of
sport
Leaves all the toil to the dogs
And the glory and brush to the hunter.
For this kind of thing
They were well fit—
And none of them went home too sober!



TWENTIETH CATERWAUL

MRS. HORTON sent Alice away—she left last night
After dark.

It was better the neighbors

Shouldn't see!

There was no reason therefore

To send poor Jack away!—

Perhaps it was just as well?

Mrs. Horton wouldn't have Alice around

Lest it embarrass Edith and—her. . . .

I followed Alice some way and she seemed
Quite cheerful enough.

Waiting is much the same

No matter what one expects.



TWENTY-FIRST CATERWAUL

BROUGH is through with the Courts
And continues to ride in his car.
He called for Edith last night
When Mrs. Horton was out—she had gone
To the hospital where Alice was
Supposed to have gone. . . .

Brough's chauffeur

Isn't paid but it's the only way to get what
One wants—to keep right on
Especially when fishing for eels!
Brough is a financier—the rest of us
Only fish!



TWENTY-SECOND CATERWAUL

IN my morning stroll I found
The Jerolamon Jones' door stood open;
I looked about and went in
But received a scanty welcome—
Indeed I was promptly chased out
By the maid.

This afternoon Mrs. Jones called
To beg Mrs. Horton
To loan her the valuable cat
As the maid had discovered
A mouse.

Thus do values increase
And appreciation follow apace!



TWENTY-THIRD CATERWAUL

THE maid that had chased me out
Fondled me as she carried me over
Till my fur bristled. . . .

The mice have
Disappeared—I finished as luncheon was served,
And sat by the serving-table.
But the Joneses all ate so much
That I wasn't even noticed—and when I was,
They sent me back to the Horton's
At once. . . .

Mrs. Horton fed me herself!



TWENTY-FOURTH CATERWAUL

I saw the maid, Alice, last night;
She was wandering near the bright lights
And the carnivorous shadows—Shadows
That burned to my soul as I saw her
Speak to a man. They went down the street
Together, the veil of darkness hid them,
And when I got home Mrs. Horton
Was telling a friend that "Alice
Was lost beyond any redemption; at any rate
She herself could no longer help!"—
What problems beset our family!



TWENTY-FIFTH CATERWAUL

JACK was home for Christmas
But I saw him hardly at all—
To the front door he now has a key
And the hours he keeps are quite varied.
One morning he slept very late
And the name that he spoke in his dreams
Was "Alice."
Mrs. Horton was proud of her son and the party
She gave him was sumptuous.



TWENTY-SIXTH CATERWAUL

WE have a new cook at the Horton's
Who saves the bean water for soup. . . .
I've enjoyed such broth at the Mallory's,
But at the Horton's! ! !—
And their bills are always as large
As before Bridget was installed.
But Edith and Mrs. Horton are pleased
And the baby and I can't complain! !



TWENTY-SEVENTH CATERWAUL

THERE'S a new baby at the Mallory's
And the rest of the children are pleased;
Mallory and his wife are as happy as larks. . . .
Edith Horton has a toy Angora
And Mrs. Horton has forgotten me—
Indeed she has put me out. . . .
Again I must wander the streets!



TWENTY-EIGHTH CATERWAUL

I FOLLOWED Alice last night
Down to her alley and room—
She stooped as she entered her door
And petted me much as she used to. . . .
Then she cuddled her baby and seemed
Far fonder of it than Mrs. Horton of hers
And nearly as much
As Edith of her angora. . . .



TWENTY-NINTH CATERWAUL

I SAT on the curb at the corner
Just outside the saloon
Where politics rule and
Presidents are made and unmade.
Two men were discussing the War. . . .
And when they were through, the conclusion
Was discussion untempered by argument. . . .
Unconvinced I went on my way.



THIRTIETH CATERWAUL

ALL afternoon I sat in the shade
Of a hideous skyscraper
On the Avenue.
Women of all sorts went by
And their footgear and stockings
Were varied.
Skirts that our grandmothers used
To clothe five- and ten-year-old girlies
Revealed twelve inches of hose—
Nor the three-shade boots that shod them
Would help a Chinaman guess
The age of the wearers who proudly
Boasted this awful foundation. . . .
And yet are most of the women
Sweet-souled and modest. . . .
I polished my claws once again! .



THIRTY-FIRST CATERWAUL

I LOOKED in at the restaurant window
Through which gleamed a medley of color—
Diamonds, pearl pendants and rubies,
And ruby and gold was the wine
Blazing first in glasses rich-stemmed,
Then blazoned bright in the glances
Of women;
Some with their husbands and fathers,
Others leering and brazen—
But my milk tasted sweeter
Next morning, for to the poor
All things are pure!



THIRTY-SECOND CATERWAUL

I HADN'T eaten for hours
And all the house doors were shut—
The heat of the sun was oppressive
So I languished in the shade,
Though my appetite was appalling. . . .
Beside there were plenty of sparrows
Ready to eat when I chose to. . . .
But when the sun was gone,
So were the sparrows!



THIRTY-THIRD CATERWAUL

THE Mallorys have taken me in. . . .
Mallory says: one more to feed. . . .
But the children like it to play
And it looks like Horton's old cat
So it's certain to be a good one. . . .
Even if discarded.



THIRTY-FOURTH CATERWAUL

I MRS. MALLORY read from the paper
Where wise ones answer fool's queries
And this was one of the questions:
Is it possible a woman
Who has bitten her nails all her life
Since first she had teeth
Could so cause her baby
The affliction of two thumbs on one hand? . . .
Did they ever think that of cats?



THIRTY-FIFTH CATERWAUL

IF we really had nine lives,
None akin to the others
And all the hopes of each life
Were answered in the next,
Perhaps a cat's existence would
Still be unsatisfactory?



THIRTY-SIXTH CATERWAUL

JOE MALLORY told Jack about Alice—
At least of her fate.
Jack found her address
And wanted to help. . . .
And yet there are some
Who believe heredity infallible!



THURTY-SEVENTH CATERWAUL

WHILE Jack tried to smother
Alice's wild burning fires
Joe never obtruded—
But when Jack was not watching
Joe brought more wood
To the kindling. . . .
Still they were friends.



THIRTY-EIGHTH CATERWAUL

You should have read Brough's
Obituary. . . . He died
When he'd rescued a fortune
By making hardware and debts:
. . . . **MOST RESPECTED MERCHANT . . .**
PHILANTHROPIST. . . . Loss to
The Community . . . and over a
Dozen "Resolved's."
The Merchants' Club framed his picture.
And to think
Generations of men proudly
Will claim his descent!



THIRTY-NINTH CATERWAUL

EDITH HORTON is married—
(Joe Mallory went to the wedding)—
Many a thorn-edge is dulled
By brushing it by in a hurry. . . .
And roses often change hue
Between the bright sun and the limelight.



FORTIETH CATERWAUL

I WATCHED a man cranking his motor.
It stalled. . . .
He tinkered with levers
Till he gave it up in despair
And stood disconsolate staring.
When he cranked it again
It started so quickly
That it raised the hair of my coat.



FORTY-FIRST CATERWAUL

JONES' collie and Mallory's hound
Were discussing a new-found bone
With vicious snarling and snapping
And other unseemly behaviour. . . .
On the fence above them I sat
Distressed. . . .
Neither dared touch the prize. . . .
Nor would either allow the other.
Then Jerry and Joe both whistled. . . .
The bone lies forgotten and wasted.



FORTY-SECOND CATERWAUL

It grew very warm in the house,
The Mallorys mopping and sweating—
Perspiration is fuel for temper—
Even I couldn't stand the heat
Nor tell them no windows were open. . . .
But cats are always too obvious;
So I went out for a walk.



FORTY-THIRD CATERWAUL

ALICE is dead of consumption. . . .
All Jack's efforts were useless;
Disconsolate he tried to comfort
The last of her wasted moments. . . .
"God will forgive you," he whispered. . . .
Yet who is the judge of the Damned?—
And Joe is much disappointed
Though he feels he may have hurried
Alice's end. . . . I wonder
What I repent?—or is it only
Regret?



FORTY-FOURTH CATERWAUL

ALL my life I have studied
The passerby-faces
And known them. . . .
Sometimes they noticed me;
Others more often seemed
Unconscious I saw them.
I wondered what they were thinking. . . .
Or had they no thoughts
But like wax that responds
To momentary impressions?
I'm sure I read all the faces. . . .
Did I know them—
Except when they kicked me
Or petted?



FORTY-FIFTH CATERWAUL

At last I have to confess
That all my judgment is blinded!
Jack and Joe are now partners,
Croesus and Job united
In one homogeneous effort. . . .
And yet my kind make nights hideous
By howling continuous calamity!



FORTY-SIXTH CATERWAUL

Now that the Mallorys have money
They haven't changed the brand
Of my milk nor their butcher.
They wear more clothes
And better; but they still
Continue to pet me.



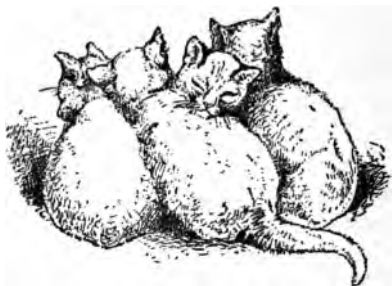
FORTY-SEVENTH CATERWAUL

JOE sent Pat Mallory through college;
Up there Pat says that his father
Is Superintendent of power—
Old Mallory's just a plain foreman—
But Pat still with reason
Differs
From the verdict given by Horton,
For Pat still worships his father,
And still calls me
Poor old Cat. . . .



FORTY-EIGHTH CATERWAUL

I HEARD Pat talking of college—
Some of Pat's friends have been visiting—
I wondered what they were learning!
Pat is surely improving.
Still Joe would always have prospered
In or out of a college—
And yet I shall always be
Just a cat.



FORTY-NINTH CATERWAUL

I'VE watched in the rain and snow
Sunshine and cloudy weather
For any change in my spirit;
But whether I've eaten a fish
Or had just a drink of milk,—
Only that I found made
A difference.

**911354**

FIFTIETH CATERWAUL

Go on with your work—
Patient Stranger!
I've told you enough of my
Wanderings.
The Mallorys are troubled with mice
And never close house for the summer!





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